Disability and Health

DECEMBER 18, 2024

CDC's website is being modified to comply with President Trump's Executive Orders.

Disability and Health Information for Women

KEY POINTS

- It is important for women with disabilities to receive regular health screenings and specialty care as needed.
- Women with disabilities are more like to experience intimate partner violence (IPV) than women without a disability.
- Discover resources and health information for women with disabilities.

Background

About 36 million women in the U.S. have disabilities—and the number is growing. About 44% of those aged 65 years or older are living with a disability.[1] The most common cause of disability for women is arthritis or rheumatism.[2]

Women with disabilities need the same general health care as women without disabilities. In addition, they may need specialty care to address their individual needs.[3]

This section of our website has tools and health information for women with disabilities.

Breast Cancer Screening: The Right to Know

Breast cancer is a major public health concern for all women, including women with disabilities. Women who have disabilities are just as likely as women without disabilities to have ever received a mammogram. However, they are significantly less likely to have been screened within the recommended guidelines. CDC has developed a family of health promotion materials (e.g., posters, MP3 files, low-tech fliers, print advertisements, and tip sheets) to increase awareness of breast cancer among women with physical disabilities and encourage these women to get screened. Materials share the tagline "Breast Cancer Screening: The Right to Know" and feature four women with physical disabilities who have survived breast cancer.

Breast Cancer Screening: The Right to Know »

Cervical cancer screening

Cervical cancer is the easiest female cancer to prevent, with regular screening tests and follow-up. It also is highly curable when found and treated early. All women are at risk for cervical cancer, including women with disabilities. It occurs most often in women over age 30. It is important to get tested for cervical cancer because 6 out of 10 cervical cancers occur in women who have never received a Pap test or have not been tested in the past five years. Learn more about cervical cancer screening.

Cervical Cancer Screening »

Center for Research on Women with Disabilities (CROWD)

CROWD promotes, develops, and disseminates information to improve the health and expand the life choices of women with disabilities. The site provides information on sexuality, reproductive health, self-esteem, stress management, and more.

CROWD »

WomensHealth.gov

The federal government's source for women's health information.

WomensHealth.gov »

Women’s health information from CDC

CDC's website on women's health: working to promote and protect the health, safety, and quality of life of women at every stage of life.

Women's Health information »

Healthy living

People with disabilities need health care and health programs for the same reasons anyone else does—to stay well, active, and a part of the community.

Having a disability does not mean a person can't be healthy. Being healthy means the same thing for all of us—getting and staying in good physical, mental, and emotional health so we can lead full, active lives. That means having the tools and information to make healthy choices and knowing how to prevent illness.

Learn more about healthy living »

Intimate partner violence

About 1 in 4 women have experienced contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner during their lifetime. Research has shown that women with a disability are more likely to experience intimate partner violence (IPV) than those without a disability. In fact, researchers found that, compared to women without a disability, women with a disability were significantly more likely to report experiencing each form of IPV measured, which includes rape, sexual violence other than rape, physical violence, stalking, psychological aggression, and control of reproductive or sexual health. [4]

Learn how to prevent intimate partner violence »

SOURCES

CONTENT SOURCE:
Disability and Health; National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities

REFERENCES

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2. Theis KA, Steinweg A, Helmick CG, Courtney-Long E, Bolen JA, Lee R. Which one? What kind? How many? Types, causes, and prevalence of disability among U.S. adults. Disabil Health J. 2019 Jul;12(3):411-421. doi: 10.1016/j.dhjo.2019.03.001.
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4. Breiding MJ, Armour BS. The association between disability and intimate partner violence in the United States. Ann Epidemiol. 2015 Jun;25(6):455-7. doi: 10.1016/j.annepidem.2015.03.017.